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great as he afterwards became, and overwhelming as was the world's applause, the loss of those near and dear to him gave such repeated shocks to his sensitive mind, that many of the hours of his artistic triumph were clouded with anxiety and grief, and embittered with the thought that the loving and loved companions of his youth could no longer yield him that sympathy and advice which seemed as necessary to his existence as the air he breathed.

MR. HENRY LESLIE'S CHOIR.

THE first concert of the present season took place on Thursday, the 17th ult., at St. James's Hall. We have so frequently called attention to the excessive delicacy with which the compositions sung by this choir are invariably given, that we have little to add to our previous remarks on the present occasion. The programme was interesting on account of some clever madrigals by Mr. R. L. Pearsall and Mr. John Barnett, being mixed with so genuine a specimen of the old school as "Stay Corydon," by John Wilbye. Something in the words and music of the true madrigal seems to belong to a time long passed by; and although we listen with pleasure to such modern imitations as those given at this concert, we cannot but feel that they resemble those modern antiques which enthusiastic antiquaries love to build in their grounds, so that they may gratify themselves by looking backward, rather than forward, in their daily life. The "part-song" which, without wishing to disturb the madrigal as a pure specimen of a certain time and school, seems more in accordance with our present musical requirements is, we think, destined to supersede that quaint form of composition so successfully carried out in this country, at a time when the art was still struggling for life and freedom. Much interest was excited on this occasion by the performance of Spohr's *Ode to St. Cecilia*, for soprano and chorus with organ accompaniment, which was excellently given, Madame Lemmens Sherrington sustaining most ably the soprano solo. This composition, containing all the beauties of the style of this great master, contains also much of his mannerism; and rich as it is throughout in harmony, the ear seems to seek that repose which is essential to a work of this nature. A four-part song by Mr. Henry Smart, "Waken, lords and ladies gay" (Hunting Song), was sung for the first time; and is destined to add one more to the many charming compositions of its class which this composer has written; somewhat Mendelssohnian in character, it contains the elements of popularity, whilst appealing also to the educated musician. It was sung to perfection, and was much applauded. Madame Sherrington also sang a pleasing song of Mr. Leslie's, called "The Lark's message," exceedingly well, and also an air of Auber's, which was admirably suited to her voice and style. The instrumental performers were Herr Blumner (pianoforte), and M. Lotto (violin), the first of whom played Beethoven's "Thirty-three variations on a theme in C minor," and the latter a piece by Leonhard, and Paganini's "Witches' Dance." Altogether this was a most attractive concert, and Mr. Leslie deserves every praise for the spirited manner in which he carries on his enterprise.

SACRED HARMONIC SOCIETY.

ON Friday, the 11th ult., the Christmas performances of the *Messiah* commenced, before a densely crowded audience. The wonderful progress the chorus of the society has made, was never more conspicuously displayed than on this occasion; and we doubt whether a finer performance of Handel's finest work was ever given. It may be supposed that the first appearance of Mr. Sims Reeves added materially to the attraction of the oratorio; and certainly, whether from a long rest, or from an earnest

desire to compensate for his absence, we never heard him in finer voice. Madame Parepa, and Madame Sainton Dolby, Mr. Renwick (who, with a fine voice, is still a student), and Mr. Patey, were the other vocalists. Mr. T. Harper's accompaniment to "The trumpet shall sound," was, as usual, one of the great features of the evening.

On the following Friday the *Messiah* was repeated with the same vocalists.

NATIONAL CHORAL SOCIETY.

THE performances of this society have commenced for the season, under the direction of Mr. G. W. Martin. The first oratorio, *Judas Maccabæus*, deserves especial mention, from the fact of Mr. W. H. Cummings having undertaken the tenor part, which was to have been sung by Mr. Sims Reeves, at a very short notice. On his own merits, Mr. Cummings fully deserved the hearty applause with which he was greeted; and the effect he created in "Sound an Alarm," may fairly warrant him in the belief that he is destined to take rank as a sound oratorio singer. Exeter Hall was crowded; and the chorus, on the whole, showed unmistakeable signs of careful training. On Wednesday, the 16th ult., the Christmas performance of the *Messiah* was given, the principal vocalists being Miss Emily Spiller, Miss Palmer, Mr. Sims Reeves, and Mr. Thomas.

THE THREE-CHOIR FESTIVAL FOR 1864.

THIS Triennial Musical Festival of the United Choirs of Worcester, Hereford, and Gloucester, will be this year held in Hereford; and promises to be one of the very best that has yet taken place. The Dean and Chapter have already granted the use of the Cathedral; and a great improvement will be effected by placing the orchestra at the west end, thus securing a more ample accommodation for the public than has been the case at any former festival. The evening concerts at the Shire Hall, too, will be rendered doubly attractive by the fact of a new orchestra having been erected, and other important alterations having been carried out, with the view of aiding the effect of the music, and the comfort of the audience. Mr. G. Townshend Smith, whose exertions in promoting the success of these meetings are so well known and appreciated, has resolved on this occasion to increase the number of stewards to fifty; and when we announce that forty-five of them have already accepted the office, it will be seen how large an amount of interest is felt in the undertaking. The following is a list of those who have given in their names:—The Right Hon. the Lord Bateman, Lord Lieutenant (second time); the Right Hon. the Earl Somers; the Right Hon. and Ven. the Lord Saye and Sele, D.C.L. (second time); the Right Hon. the Lord Northwick; the Right Hon. and Rev. G. Herbert, Clun (second time); the Hon. Colonel Windsor Clive, M.P., Hewell Grange, Bromsgrove; the Hon. P. Wyndham, M.P., 44, Belgrave-square, London; Sir V. Cornewall, Bart., Moccas Court (second time); Sir W. Curtis, Bart., Cainham Court (third time); Sir J. Russell Bailey, Bart., Glanusk Park; Admiral Sir T. Hastings, C.B., Titley Court (second time); J. King King, Esq., M.P., Staunton Park (second time); H. Mildmay, Esq., M.P., Gayton Hall (second time); Col. Clifford, M.P., Llancilio (second time); G. Glive, Esq., M.P., Perrystone (second time); G. Hardy, Esq., M.P., Hempsted Park, Staplehurst; the Mayor of Hereford, E. Pateshall, Esq., Pool House; J. H. Arkwright, Esq., Hampton Court (fourth time), R. Arkwright, Esq., 3, Eaton-place, West, London; F. L. Bodenham, Esq., Hereford (second time); Rev. J. Burdon, English Bicknor; W. H. Cooke, Esq., Q.C., 42, Wimpole-street, London; Rev. G. Cornewall, Moccas; Rev. G. Davenport, Foxley; T. Evans, Esq., Sufton Court (second time); J. Freeman, Esq., Gaines (second time); Rev. E. R. Hampden, Cradley (second time); Rev. E. B. Hawkshaw, Weston (second time); R. Hereford, Esq.,